

I just received a press release from the leader's office, majority leader BILL FRIST's office. This is something we need to celebrate. This is from Senator BILL FRIST:

The Senate will take up the three stem cell bills on Monday, July 17, and will complete all action by Tuesday, July 18. There's tremendous promise in stem cell research. . . .

That is really good news. I compliment and applaud the majority leader for allowing next week to go to stem cell research. To those people watching in America, it is good news. These people who have been hopeful—like the man who tapped me on the shoulder in church—we are going to do everything we can to get the 60 votes necessary to get this sent to the President's desk.

Mr. DURBIN. If the Senator from Nevada will yield, I address the comment and question to him.

Despite the fact we have been pushing for a year, even speaking to this issue in the Senate today, sending a letter to Senator FRIST tomorrow, I thank him and congratulate Senator FRIST. This is a bipartisan bill. It is critically important to our Nation to move forward on stem cell medical research.

When President Bush closed down this promising area of medical research almost 5 years ago, we left a void in terms of opportunity for finding cures for critical diseases.

It has never been a partisan issue. Former First Lady Nancy Reagan has pushed for stem cell research. Senator ORRIN HATCH, Senator ARLEN SPECTER—there have been so many who have stepped forward asking for stem cell research. In the spirit of this announcement from Senator FRIST, I hope we can move forward in a bipartisan fashion, pass the key bill, H.R. 810, by July 18, and send it to President Bush. I hope he will reconsider his promised veto of this bill.

I ask, if I might, of the Senator from Nevada, when it comes to the Voting Rights Act, another issue which the Senator raised, the Senator and I are from a common generation that recalls the civil rights struggle we lived through as we went through school and watched it unfold in America. The Voting Rights Act was passed to protect the rights of minorities to vote across the United States.

I ask the Senator from Nevada whether he is aware of a comment made by Jack Kemp, the former Republican Vice Presidential nominee, a former Republican Member of Congress, when speaking of the House Republicans' efforts to stop reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act—this has been occurring over the last few weeks—that former Vice Presidential nominee Jack Kemp said that his Republican Party had better get this thing passed; we need to get back on the right side of history.

I ask the Senator from Nevada, has this not been a bipartisan issue, the Voting Rights Act, where both parties tried to be on the right side of history

in moving toward more opportunity and striking down discrimination when it came to voting in elections in America?

Mr. REID. The Senator from Illinois and I served in the House with Jack Kemp. Jack Kemp was an all-star: a great quarterback in college, a great quarterback in the professional ranks, and a very good Member of Congress. He speaks the truth.

The Republicans need to get on the right side of history. Holding this up is not good for them. It is not good for our country.

Mr. DURBIN. I say to the Senator from Nevada in closing, there are Members in the Senate, and we are moving to the Homeland Security bill. That is a timely bill. I am glad we are considering it.

At another time, we will address the issue of increased cost of college education for working families and the failure of the Republican leadership to schedule opportunities for tax deductions and reductions in student loan costs for these students.

Of course, the energy issue is the issue I ran into all across Illinois. We have seen a doubling of gasoline prices under the Bush administration, there is a severe hardship on families and businesses, and still we have no energy policy to address this issue from this Republican-dominated Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

STEM CELLS AND THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I make a couple of points based on what we just heard.

The first has to do with stem cells. As the Presiding Officer knows, I am a practicing physician. I am still delivering babies on weekends and our breaks. I am concerned in our country because we are letting emotional issues far override what the science today says on stem cells.

We have a lot of people who have significant diseases who have been convinced that the only way those diseases will ever be solved is to use embryonic stem cells. The dishonesty in the debate is concerning to me as a physician because the real breakthroughs have not been with embryonic stem cells.

There are now 70 treatments being utilized every day in this country from stem cells derived from core blood and adult blood stem cells. There also is wonderful new research in the last year that says you can gain exactly the same pluripotent—a cell that will do anything—from germ cells, from altered nuclear transfer, from three different mechanisms to get the exact same ability to cure diseases and never destroy the first embryo.

We do not hear that in the debate. We do not hear the truth of what the science is showing us, and we do not recognize that even though the Federal Government is funding, in a limited

amount, embryonic stem cell research, the fact is, where the private money is going—it is not going to embryonic stem cell research, it is going to other pluripotent stem cell research that doesn't have anything to do with embryos.

This debate, as a physician and as a scientist, concerns me because it is not based on facts or on truth. For us to continue to belie the fact of what the science is showing us today creates a false impression based on politics and false hope. There is great hope for people with diabetes, there is great hope for people who have neurologic injury, but it is not coming from embryonic stem cell research; it is coming from pluripotent stem cell research outside of that. During the debate next week, I plan on making that point. I am going to counter every point that belies science and does not recognize the true facts out there today.

The final comment I will make is that the Voting Rights Act does not expire for a year and a half. We ought to get it right. We ought to make sure everyone is protected in this country in terms of the right to access. To say we have to do that right now, even though we are probably going to do it, to claim that we do not want to do it is a false claim. No. 2, we have plenty of time to do it even if we do not get it done this year. Those are important things for the American public to know and be aware of. No one in this Senate thinks we should not reauthorize the Voting Rights Act. But we ought to do it in a way that represents the principles on which this country is founded and not the politics of the next election.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 5441, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5441) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Feinstein amendment No. 4556, to amend chapter 27 of title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the unauthorized construction, financing, or, with reckless disregard, permitting the construction or use on one's land, of a tunnel or subterranean passageway between the United States and another country